

*The Power and Policy of Satan, bounded and
baffled by the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2044
IN THREE
SERMONS

PREACHED

On *Saturday, Sabbath, and Monday,*

Before, At, and After,

The Celebration of the SACRAMENT

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER,

At *Stirling, June 13th 1742.*

Upon *Luke xxii. 31, 32.*

By the REVEREND

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The Power and Policy of Satan bounded and baffled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke xxii. 31, 32.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as Wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren.

THE Quarrel between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent is ancient, mortal and implacable. 'Tis almost as old as the World, *Gen. iii. 15.* This Enmity is maintain'd between the Church militant, and the Church malignant, between the Synagogue of God and the Synagogue of Satan, as between the *Israelites* and the *Philistines*. Each of these Parties have their Champion; as the *Israelites* had *David*, and the *Philistines* *Goliath*. Satan's Armies are Legions of evil Spirits, and evil Men, seduc'd by Errors, deceived by false Promises, and hired by the Wages of Unrighteousness. Their General is the Devil or Satan. Christ's Armies are the good

Angels, that encamp about them that fear God, as so many Horses and Chariots of Fire, as *Gebazi* saw when his Eyes were open'd; and Saints, who are as an Army with Banners; with Banners display'd, ready to fight, having put on the whole Armour of God. But the great General and Captain of the Host is the Lord Jesus Christ, who did encounter our grand Enemy two remarkable Times, once in the Wilderness, and once on the Cross, and both Times kill'd him with his own Weapons, once by Scripture, and once by Death, as *David* cut off the Head of *Goliath* with his own Sword; and thro' Death, did destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and, in Sign of Victory brought away the Keys, *Rev. i. 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen: And have the Keys of Hell and of Death.* For evermore! There is our part, and our Hope. He is alive for evermore, until he shall tread down Satan under our Feet, *Rev. xvi. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.* Till then, we must neither look for Peace nor Truce, but stand upon our Ground with our Swords drawn, and our Watch set, and our Armour girt on; knowing that our Cause is good, our Captain great, our Conquest certain, and our Crown immortal that fadeth not away.

This

This Enmity in Satan proceeds from Malice and Envy, two active and stirring Principles; Malice to God, and Envy to Men. For, not being able, with his Poison, to reach God, he casts it out upon Man, his Image-bearer. Now, as the Quarrel is old, so 'tis deadly. He is a Murderer from the Beginning, a Serpent, a Lion, a Dragon, an Enemy, an Accuser, a Destroyer: Yea, the older, still the subtler, having still the more experimental Subtilty. And knowing that his Time is short, he rages the more; as a Stone moves fastest, when it comes nearest the Centre. He is now the old Serpent, the *red Dragon*, *Rev. xii. 3.* the *roaring Lion*, *1 Pet. v. 8.* a Murderer from the Beginning, *John 8. 44.* Satan practised his Cruelty upon the first Pair of Men that ever were in the World, and prevailed when *Cain* slew his Brother; and upon the old Quarrel, because *Abel's* Works were good, and *Cain's* evil, *1 John iii. 12.* Ever since the Blood of *Abel*, red hath been the Churches Colour, and sanguine hath been her Complexion; their Constancy in suffering being an Evidence of the Truth they suffered for. Yet they have not been more sorrowful than fruitful; for the Blood of the Martyrs hath still been the Seed of the Church. From *Abel's* Time to this Day the Serpent hath never been idle, The Devil hath never been asleep: Never hath he changed

changed in his Mind, abated in his Malice, nor desisted in his Mischief, wherein he hath prevailed upon the Children of Men. His Method hath still been either by Subtilty or Cruelty; sometimes as a crooked Serpent by the insinuation of Error, Heresy and Delusion, wherewith the Church hath been dangerously infested; at other Times, like a flying Dragon or a roaring Lyon, by the Fury of Threatnings and Tortures, battering down and devouring with Tyranny and Persecution. Hard it is to tell in which he hath been most successful. No sonner had the Church Rest and Peace from the bloody Sword, but they fell out in Factions, insomuch that the Church hath grown most, when most oppressed, as Israel multiplied in their Bondage. 'Twas so from the Beginning; it was so in the first and best Days of the Church. As a Serpent he began, and he will be but the old Serpent still. It was so when Christ himself was present in the Army, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as Wheat, &c.*

Thus powerful, and thus malicious is our Enemy; thus vigilant, and thus implacable. What then shall we do? Shall we hang down our Heads in Despair? Or, like Cowards, trust to our Heels, as if they were better Soldiers than our Hands? O no, says our Lord, as *David of Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 32. Let no Man's Heart*
fail

fail because of him ; more are with us than against us : Yea, *if God be with us who can be against us* ? Rom. viii. 31. is the Motto of the Christian Warriour. Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, is surely more vigilant for the Safety of the Church, than Satan can be for their Ruin. He can break the Lion's Teeth, and take away the Serpent's Sting. This Wisdom can baffle the Subtilty of Satan, unbottom his Dceps, and defeat his Wiles ; easily break thro' his Forces ; yea, the God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us : For, as he hath promised, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail. Neither his Subtilty nor Cruelty shall be able to overthrow the Faith of the Elect, as the Text assures us, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as Wheat : But I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not ; and when thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren.*

In the Words you have, 1. A Premotion. 2. An Admonition. In the former two Things ; 1. The Temptation. 2. The Success. In the Temptation you may notice, 1. The Person warning of the Temptation, Christ. 2. The Person tempted, *Simon*. 3. The Quality of the Temptation, *a Winnowing*. 4. The Limitation of it : 'Tis a *Desiring* to winnow you. In the Success notice, 1. The Grace assaulted, *his Faith*. 2. The Power

of this Assault, tending to make Faith stagger and fail 3. The Protector in this Case, Christ our Defence, the Seed of the Woman. 4. The Mean, and Prevalence thereof, *I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not.* The Latter is the Admonition. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren.*

I would offer some Remarks, 1 Upon the Circumstances of the Time and Occasion wherein these Words were spoke 2. Upon the Circumstances of the Text 3. Upon the Warning itself.

I. I am to offer some Remarks upon the Circumstances of the Time and Occasion wherein these Words were spoke. Here the Circumstances are to be considered, namely, 1. The Time that Satan choos'd 2. The Occasion, Christ's Suffering and Passion. Hence observe,

First, The Afflictions of the Godly are Stumbling-blocks. So it was with the Sufferings of the Head; the smiting of the Shepherd occasioned the scattering of the Sheep, *Zeck. xiii. 7.* The Afflictions of the Godly are Stumbling-blocks thro' Satan's Policy. The Cross of Christ is called a Scandal. *Paul's Chain and Bonds* were Matter of Offence to many. But 'tis said, *2 Tim. i. 16.* that *Onesiphorus* he *was not ashamed of my Chain.* *Acts xxviii. 20.* For the Hope of *Israel* I am bound with this Chain. But there are two Ways where-

by Satan makes the Trials of the Godly and their Afflictions Stumbling-blocks; and that, 1. By corrupting our Judgments. The Devil persuades Men that the Religion that is persecuted is not good. On this Account *Eliphaz* was tempted to condemn *Job*, Chap. iv. 7. *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the Righteous cut off?* When the Wicked prosper, and the Godly seem to perish, and be cut off in this Life, it is a great Temptation even to the Godly; as it was to *Asaph*, who got not over this Stumbling Block, till he went to the Sanctuary, *Psal. lxxiii. 3. ----- 17. Jer. xlv. 17.* When we served the Queen of Heaven, we were in a better State, said they. 2. By stirring up base Affections, Self-love, and selfish Inclinations; Base Fears: The *Israelites* were valiant till they are at the red Sea; and till they hear of the *Anakims*. Set down therefore what Religion will cost you. Expect not to go to Heaven in a Chariot. Forecast with the worst. Choose with *Moses*, to suffer Affliction. Mortify your base Affections, and get on a Resolution to suffer. No fearful Soldier should go to War. Love of God and the World cannot stand together.

Secondly, Observe from the Time, that Satan is wary and watchful in taking Opportunity to tempt. *The Devil walketh about like a roaring Lion*, 1. Pet. v. 8. *He goes*

to and fro in the Earth, and walketh up and down in it, Job i. 7. We read Eph. 6. how the whole Armour of God is to be put on, to note or point out the Vigilance of the Enemy, his Sleights and Ambushments, Snares and Gins; Instance in the first Temptation, when he assaulted Eve. 1. He tempts the weaker Vessel. 2. When she was alone. 3. By a subtile Lye, *Yea hath God said, ye shall not eat of every Tree?* intermixed with some Truth, to make the Lye the more taking, *Ye shall be as Gods knowing Good and Evil*, a Truth, but the Dreadfulness of it covered; for they were to be indeed as Devils, knowing Good and Evil to their fearful Experience. 4. By a solemn attesting God himself to confirm this Truth, for *God knows*, says he, *that your Eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods*. Where learn, that Satan's strongest Attacks to delude are in Gods Name. If he did not father his Lies, Deceits and Delusions upon God, they could not be so successful. Satan's Slaves, and these that are tempted and deluded by him are most ready with their solemn Appeals to God, that he knows this or that to be a Truth, which yet is but a Lye. God knows that you shall have your Eyes opened, and be as Gods knowing Good and Evil. He then said, *God knows you shall know*; and now he is ready to suggest, saying, *God knows that you do know*. What if Satan

and now on, the nts, first He the bath free? the Gods the were and By firm that be as ngest If and be fo that most God, ruth, that and be He now; ying, hat it Satan

Satan, at this Day, be making some to say, God knows that now my Eyes are opened ; I see what I did not see ? God knows that I know some Good and Evil, that I did not know : God knows that a good Work is wrought upon me : I am so sure of it, that I can attest God in the Matter : I am so sure of it, that no Man shall make me think otherwise. People may have Confidence of this Sort, and yet be under a devilish Delusion. Satan teacheth them to say, God knows that my Eyes are opened. &c.

This should teach us to be wise and wary, because we are weak, 1 Pet. v. 8. The Devil will have some Advantage, tho' we were never so watchful ; but, the more watchful we are, the less will he have.

1. We are to watch and observe the Time. 'Tis like, when we are weak in Body and Mind, distempered and discouraged, he will set upon us, &c.
2. When we are alone. Some Sins are not committed but alone. The Enemy sets upon his Adversary alone.
3. When a faithful Ministry is absent and forgot. Thus the *Israelites* turned to the golden Calf in *Moses's* Absence. In Time of Gospel-preaching, People do not provide for the Time of Temptation, but forget Instruction they have got, and so lie open to Snares.
4. When we are in evil Company. *Joseph* in *Egypt*, learns to swear ; *Peter*, in the Judgment-hall, to

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forfwear. Put a Coal in the Fire, and it receives the Colour of the Fire. The very Sight of Ganting and Yawning smites others with the fame Disease: A Fit of Laughter will provoke others to laugh; and so will the Weeping and Wailing of one or two set an Hundred a Weeping and Wailing which may be merely the Fruit of a natural Sympathetick Temper in People. But, when these take Footing in Places of Temptation, especially spiritual and devote Assaults of the Enemy; the Infection may prove very dangerous and dismal: And that even, 5. When we are in good Company. So *Peter* was a Temptation to *Christ*, and afterward to *Barnabas*, when carried away with the Dissimulation; *Aaron* and *Miriam* a Temptation to *Moses*. So may good Men and Ministers be great Temptations, thro' the Power and Policy of Satan. 6. When the Occasions of Sin are present; and tempting Objects are in View; then we need to be most watchful and wary, *Prov. xxiii.* 31. *Look not on the Wine when it is red, when it giveth the Colour in the Cup, when it moveth itself aright.* When Occasions of Sin are of a ruddy and beautiful Colour; when the Cup of Temptation moves itself aright; when spiritual Temptations, and religious ones, have a fair and glorious-like Appearance; look not *then* upon them: Beware of

of them, they are like Water and Wind to a Mill.

Again, if Satan be so wary and watchful, we need to take Heed of three Sins that are his Opportunities ; as 1. The Sin of our Calling ; such as we are liable to therein. 2. Sins of Custom, that you have been long inured unto. 3. Sins of Constitution ; For, tho' all Sins be like Weeds in a Garden ; yet, some are such as overtop the rest. 4. Sins that easily beset, and Sins that the present Occurrence makes you most liable unto. So, when Christ had fasted long, then he is tempted to turn Stones to Bread at the Devil's Motion. When People have prayed long ; and not been heard ; then he tempts to say, Why should we wait any longer ? O look to an once tempted Jesus, who suffered being tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted, *Heb. ii. 8.*

II. I proposed next to offer some Remarks upon the Circumstances of the Text ; which are these four. 1. The Person warning, namely, Christ. 2. The Person warned, *Simon*. 3. The Ingemination and doubling of the Name, *Simon, Simon*. 4. The Solemnity of the Warning, *Behold, Satan, &c.*

First, The Person warning, namely, Christ, here called *the Lord*. *And the Lord said, &c.* Remark that Christ is a Lord, the Lord of Lords, the Lord of Hosts,
Lord

Lord over Heaven, Earth and Hell. He hath Right by Nature, as God, and by Donation, as Mediator to the universal Government, All the Devils in Hell are under his Check and Controle, being far exalted above all Principalities and Powers, and Head over all Things to the Church.

Secondly, The Person warned, *Simon*. *Quest.* Why doth Christ address himself to *Simon*, when the Danger was general? The Word here is, *He hath desired you; but I have prayed for thee.* The Reason may be either from the Eminency of the Person, or the Imminency of *Peter's* Fall, which Christ foresaw. 1. The Eminency of his Person: For we can allow a Pre-eminency and Firstship of Order, tho' not of Office. To them all was committed the Word of Reconciliation, the Administration of Sacrament, and the Power of the Keys, as well as to *Peter*: Nor is the Promise here made to him, as a Promise peculiar to him and to his Successor the Bishop of *Rome*, as a Privilege of Infallibility in Judgment, and Indeficiency of Faith; as the Flatterers of the *Roman Faction* gather from hence: But, as a Stake in a Hedge, well shaken and knocked, should stand the faster; so, *Peter* being tempted, and then converted, should strengthen others, as he soon attempted, in going first in to the Sepulchre, tho' *John* was

was first there; for, tho' Love be nimblest, Faith is boldest. 2. For the Imminency of *Peter's* Fall, which Christ foresaw, and gave him an *Item* of it; but more expressly anon, ver. 34. with a *Peter*, *I tell thee, that the Cock shall not crow this Day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me* Christ saw where Satan had aim'd his poisoned Arrow, and warned him. He saw that he lay open by his Presumption, and so calls upon him as *Dalila* did upon *Samson* (but with more Sincerity) *The Philistines are upon thee*, *Samson*: So Christ here, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, &c.* As fine a Web as that Spider Satan can spin, to inwrap the Souls of Men; the nimble Eye of Christ can espy it out, and when he pleases he can sweep it down.

If any ask, Why did he not prevent what he foresaw and could hinder? I answer, 1. The Grace of God is not Debtor to any Man; God cannot be unrighteous in suffering that, which he is not bound or obliged to hinder. 2. God would not suffer Evil in, or upon, his Children, if he did not know how to bring Good out of Evil; yea, the greatest Good out of the greatest Evil. So, out of *Judas's* Treason in betraying Christ to Death, he brought the Life and Comfort of all the World. God suffers Temptations to take Place for many good Reasons, as we may see afterward: But, here I shall only say, from

Simon's

Simon's Case, Let him that thinketh he standeth take Heed lest he fall.

Remark, That these whom God advances to the greatest Excellence, Satan assaults with the greatest Violence. As the Sun beats hottest upon the rising Bank; so is Satan's Envy levelled most against these whom God hath advanced above others, either in Grace or Honour. God had no sooner marked out *Job* for his Uprightness, but Satan marked him out for Envy and Mischief. So the King of *Syria* commanded his Soldiers to bend all their Force against the King of *Israel*! *1 Kings* xxii. 31. When *Joshuab* stood before the Angel of the Lord, Satan stood at his Right-hand to resist him, *Zeck* iii. 1. Our first Parents escaped not long, *Gen.* iii. Yea, he set upon Christ himself with all his Forces, *Matth.* iv. *Quest.* Why does God permit this? *Ans.* 1. God permits it for the Trial, and so for the Honour of his Graces in them, *1 Pet.* i. 6, 7. Thus he turned Satan loose upon *Job*. As a Cutler taking a Sword, and striking it against an Anvil; why, he knows what Metal 'tis made of: So, God knows what Metal his Servants are made of, and what Satan can do, what he would do, and what he shall do. By this Means, God designs the Advancement of his own Glory, in the Victory of Faith, in the Issue. *Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried,*
he

he shall receive the Crown, Jam. i. 12. 2. God's Grace is increased in his Children by being exercised. Temptation is a School for training up Christ's Soldiers; as a Sword glisters by using, which would rust in the Scabbard. Exercise is good for our spiritual Health; especially, such as God designs for high and honourable Service: He, will have them well tried, as we dig low when we have a Mind to build high.

Again, as God has his Ends; so, Satan has his. 1. To oppose God: Out of Envy, hating them most whom God honours most. 'Tis the Nature of Envy to aim at the fairest. 2. This is his Subtility; by a compendious Way of Mischief to strike at the Root; and so the Branches must wither; to cut off the Head, and then the Body must die; to poison the Fountain, and then the Streams must needs be deadly; to cut off the Captain, and then the common Soldiers must needs yeild or fly. Therefore, they that are most eminent must be most fiercely assaulted.

Hence learn, 1. That we should pray for all; especially for these that are in eminent Stations; as all the Members of the Body run to the Succour of the Head. We must pray for them that our Petitions may prevent Satan. *Pray for us*, says the Apostle, and for me. We have many Enemies, we that are Ministers; especially, if aiming at the Overthrow of Satan's Kingdom

dom and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. The Devil came with open Mouth against Christ. Why dost thou trouble us before our Time? The preaching of Christ crucified, and calling Men from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God, troubles the Devil exceedingly: And O! how many Enemies did he inflame against Christ; Scribes, Pharisees, Lawyers, Herodians and the People? 2. Let Men be content with a low State, if God has put them into it; for, the more Honour, the more Danger. The Chimney and the Weather-Cock are the highest in the Building; but the one most foul, the other most shaken. The Foundation that lies lowest lies surest. Let every one be content with his own Place: God knows how to dispose us. Again, 3. Men in eminent Place may expect to be much assaulted. There was never any tall Cedar, but was well shaken; and, if not well rooted, in great Danger. 4. Hence see, that you should pity these whose eminent Place exposes them to be shaken. *Peter* did not well understand himself when he said, Tho' all Men forsake thee, yet will not I. A Coward may buckle on his Harness, and break the Air with great Words; but, when he comes into the midst of the Enemy, then his Valour is put to it; as a Pilot's Skill is most seen in a Storm. 'Tis easy to discourse of Wars and Storms,

Storms, and dying for Jesus Christ ; but 'tis another Thing to meet with them.

Thirdly, Another Circumstance of the Text is, the Ingemination and doubling of the Name, *Simon, Simon*, &c. This Ingemination of Names in Scripture is usual, and useful in these three Respects ; 1. It expresses an Ardency of Love and Affection ; as in *David* to *Absalom*, *O Absalom, Absalom ! my Son, my Son !* and our Lord *Jesus* to *Jerusalem*, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ! how oft would I have gathered*, &c. 2. As it points out the Dearness of Love, so the Nearness of Danger to the Person beloved : So, the Angel to *Abraham*, when he had his Knife drawn in his Hand to kill *Isaac*, the Angel cries out, *Abraham, Abraham*. His Words made Haste, one after another, lest they had come too late to relieve *Isaac*, that lay trembling on his Father's Knife. 3. It implies the Security of the Person thus in Danger ; as if one Word would not awaken him. Thus, Christ called to *Saul* out of Heaven, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?* Acts ix. So Christ here, *Simon, Simon* ; for any or all of these Reasons. 1. What greater Love can be than that which is shewed to the Soul ? And what Love comparable to the Love of Christ ? 'Tis Love infinitely surpassing the Love of *Jonathan*. This moves Christ to double and ingeminate his Name, *Simon, Simon*, &c. 2. What

greater Danger than this of *Simon*, running into the Mouth of the roaring Lion, without Fear or Armour? Yea his own Security had stript him naked of his Strength: Therefore, Christ, in Commiseration of him, doubles his Name, *Simon, Simon*.
 3. Security deafens us to Counsel, and hardens us to Danger; and therefore there is Need, sometimes, of wakening Ingeminations, *Simon, Simon*. We need sometimes to give hasty Intelligence of what Danger is a-coming, lest the Advertisement come too late at another Time.

Fourthly, Another Circumstance of the Text, that I notice, is, the Solemnity of the Warning, *Behold, Satan, &c.* *Behold* is a Word like a Beacon fired on a Hill-top, that betokens some extraordinary Thing, calling Men's Eyes to look to it; or as a Trumpet, that commands Silence, and begets Attention. Here Christ is the Preacher and the Crier.

Remark, Ministers are called Watchmen; and they should watch over the Souls of Men. Watchmen ought neither to be blind nor dumb; and we, whose Office it is, should be Seers to look out, and Cryers to cry out, when we espy a Danger; as good Shepherds do over the Flock, when they espy the Wolf coming, and endeavour to gather them to the Fold.

'Tis

'Tis our Duty, and we must tell you, all Places are full of Temptations. You trade upon Ice; you go among Snares. Satan is laying Snares for you every where. There is a Snare in your Profits, Pleasures, and Honours. There is a Snare and Temptation in your Meat, and Drink, and Sleep; a Snare in your Discourse, your Communication and Company. Every Night's Sleep is a Representation of Death: And, as Satan, the Prince of Darkness, never sleeps; so, you have Need, when you sleep, to close your Eyes towards Heaven, and sleep every Night, as Christ died, with a *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*. Every one of your Senses is a Window to let in Temptation, if there be not a Watch set upon them. *Eve* found Satan in an Apple; *Achan*, in a Wedge; *Gehazi*, in two Talents of Gold. Yea, there is a Temptation in your good Works. When you hear, when you pray, take Heed. Good Works may be made great Temptations to Pride of Duty: Yea, good Ministers may be made great Temptations; as was *Simon*, once and again. Blessed is the Man that feareth always. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation*. You need to prepare for Evils before they come; for, when they come, it will be too late to prepare. In Plenty, we should think of Want; in Health, prepare for Sicknes; in a Calm, prepare for

a Storm. But, alas ! when Men are most in Danger, they are most presumptuous : So *Jonah*, in the Danger of the Storm, is fast asleep, and will not be awakned, unless he be called upon by Name, and again called upon, with a *Simon, Simon*.

III. I am next to offer some Remarks upon the Warning itself, *Satan hath desired to have you, &c.*

First Remark. There is no Temptation of Satan but our Lord is privy unto ; and that, 1. In regard of his Omniscieny. *All Things are naked and open* unto him ; as a Man anatomized : So, all the Deeps of Satan are naked to him. His Eye is like the Eye of a well-drawn Picture, that is in every Corner of the Room, &c. 2 In regard of his observing Office : And he is called therefore a Shepherd, a Watchman, the Watchman of *Israel*, &c. This is Ground of Comfort to Believers.

Our Lord Jesus is very observant of the Devil's Desires. He observes what Way the Devil goes ; and he never goes to God, but Christ notices him. The Devil goes to God sometimes to accuse the Saints ; Christ observes *that* : Sometimes, to seek Advantage against them ; Christ observes *that*, &c. Why ? 1. Christ is interested in his People. 2. He is our Advocate with the Father. He is the Friend, Satan the Foe. When the Devil gets Leave to tempt them, yet Christ undertakes to baffle his
Temp-

Temptations, O! the Love of Christ to his Children.

Second Remark. The Devil is an Adversary, as doth his Name Satan import.

Quest. To whom? *Ans.* To all the Creatures of God, and Man in particular, and to God's People in a special Way. Why? 1. Because of the Quarrel in Paradise; Enmity placed between them, and a Contrariety of Nature. 2. Because he hates God, and consequently the Image of God. How long will he be an Enemy? *Ans.* Always. Why? Because God ties him up: He is a chained Adversary. O be apprehensive of the Devil's Malice and Enmity! Christ bids us love our Enemies, that is, such as are curable; but Devils are incurable. O! keep out of the Devil's Reach; and keep out of his Ground. Watch against him, as *David* against *Saul*. Watch in Prayer, in Hearing. If he tempt to Pride; answer him with a Scripture, as that, *God resisteth the Proud, &c. &c.*

Third Remark. The Devil assaults the best of Men. *Quest.* What does the Devil herein aim at? *Ans.* 1. His Credit, he strikes at the greatest; and if he be foil'd, 'tis the less Discredit. If he can overcome them, 'tis the greater Honour; if not; 'tis the less Dishonour. 2. His Advantage. By pulling down the Pillars of the House, he makes all fall. Thus, he pulls

pulls down *Adam*; and, then, all fell. Thus he would pull down Christ, that he might destroy all. *Quest.* What does God aim at in allowing him? *Ans.* 1. His own Glory; that he might be glorified. 2. That the Graces of his People may be stronger. Great shaking Winds make the Trees take better Root. Hence, Want of Temptation is an ill Sign. Again,

The Devil is most desirous to tempt the best of God's Saints. Why? 1. The best Saints carry richest Treasures. 2. The Devil knows that, if he can get an eminent Saint down, he will get down many more with him, as *Gal.* ii. 11, 12, 13. 3. 'Tis the greatest Disgrace to the Scripture. Hence, let him that standeth take Heed lest he fall. A Child of God may be cast down tho' he shall not be cast away.

'Tis the Devil's great and earnest Desire of God, that he may tempt. There are Times when the Devil goes to God, and seeks to have Leave to tempt, as, 1. In Time of carnal Security. 2. In Time of spiritual Pride. 3. After the Soul has been sealed, and had Communion with God. 4. After Christ's Approbation of a Soul. So *Job* Chap. xi. So *Peter*, *Matth.* xvi 17, 23. Therefore they need to be always keeping their Armour about them.

Fourth Remark. The Devil cannot tempt the Saints without God's Leave and Commission. This is plain, 1. From God's

absolute Power over all the World: Hence the Devils are at his Beck, *Mark ix. 25. 2.* From God's gracious Promise, setting Bounds and Limits to Satan's Temptations, *1 Cor. x. 13.-- God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, &c.*

Fifth Remark. Sifting is all that the Devil can do to the Children of God. He may trouble and tempt, but he cannot overthrow. The Devil indeed, in his Temptations, aims at Soul, and Body, and all.

Quest. Why does the Devil sift and winnow them? And why can he do no more?

Ans. 1. Because they are a People in Covenant with God. 2. They are the People whom God loves: Therefore the Devil hates them. 3. They are set up for the great Designs of God in the World, *This People have I formed for my self, they shall shew forth my Praise.* 4. Because God hath given all Believers to Christ, that he should secure them. He takes Care that none of them be lost, see *John xxxix. 6. & x. 20.* Therefore, tho' the Devil may cast down a Child of God, yet he cannot keep them down.

Hence see the great Love of God to his People. 'Tis not because he does not love them, that they are tempted; but that he may take Occasion the more to shew his Delight in them. See also the

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great Care that the Lord Jesus takes of his Children, that Satan cannot hurt them, but sift them.

Sixth Remark. Christ's Prayers are opposite to the Devil's Prayers. Christ prays for his People's Good ; but the Devil for their Hurt. The Devil seeks that our Faith may be destroyed ; Christ that our Faith fail not. And, tho' the Devil's Prayer should be heard sometimes, so as he may get Leave to tempt and loss a Child of God ; yet, Christ's Prayer is heard alwise. And hence, tho' the Devil should get the better in a Combat ; yet, he shall never win the War : The Victory shall be upon Christ's Side, &c. The Devil can never go to God, but Christ prevents him, and goes before him. *I have prayed for thee.*

Seventh Remark. Neither former Sins nor future Provocations can hinder Christ's Prayer for his Children. *Peter* had formerly tempted Christ, and, for the present, he is presumptuous ; and, for the future, Christ foresaw how he would forswear : Yet all this does not hinder Christ's Prayer for *Peter* ; but made him pity *Peter* the more, and pray for him the more, instead of casting him off. O the lasting Love of Christ !

Eighth Remark. The Children of God ought to make particular Improvement of Christ's Intercession, *I have prayed for thee.*
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'Tis not enough to say, Christ interceeds for his Saints, his sinning Saints on Earth ; but his sinful People, while in a sinning World, with their sinning Nature cleaving to them, ought to make particular Use of Christ's Intercession for themselves. Christ says, 'Tis *for thee* ; and you may say, therefore, 'Tis for *me* : O! he lov'd me, he laid down his Life for *me*, he died for *me*, he rose for *me*, he ascended for *me* ; And he liveth for ever to make Intercession for *me*.

Ninth Remark. The Falls of the Godly are owing to the Failures of Faith, an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the living God. By Unbelief they lose Sight of the Captain of their Salvation ; and then they are discouraged and discomfited. *By Faith we stand*, because by Christ we stand. Many Falls, at this Day, among the Saints, argue the many Failures of Faith. This gives Advantage to the Enemy. Satan would not get such Advantage, if we were strong in the Faith, &c.

Tenth Remark. If any be established in the Faith, and are kept from total Falling ; 'tis owing to the Author and Finisher of Faith, Christ, who says, *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.* You would loose the Grip of me quite, might he say, if I did not keep the Grip of you. A praying Jesus, by his Prayer, takes hold of God,

and takes Hold of your Faith; and so you are kept by the Power of God, thro' Faith, unto Salvation. Pray, pray, then; but lippen to Christ's Prayers.

The following Observes and Meditations were (most of them) delivered on the Monday.

N. B. Where some Heads here seem to coincide with the former, yet the Enlargements are distinct.

AFTER what I have said, I propose, at present, 1. To offer some Observes, concerning Satan and his Temptations. 2. Some Meditations upon the whole Text.

I. Some Observes concerning Satan and his Temptations.

First Observe. The Tempter is Satan, which signifies an Adversary. His Hand is, like *Ishmael's*, against every Man. O! that every Man's Hand were against him. His Name is full of Danger and Terror. We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, *Eph. vi.* Not with *Pharaoh*, or *Sisera*, or *Sennacherib*; not against *Goliath* or the *Sons of Anak*; but against the Devil and his Angels. You have a terrible Description of *Goliath*, 1 *Sam. xvii.* 4, 5, 6, 7. of his prodigious Height, with his Helmet of Brass, and

and Coat of Mail: But yet, little *David* laid him at his Length. But Satan is a more terrible Enemy, if you consider these following Particulars. 1. His Nature, as a Spirit; and such an one as can see, and not be seen; do Hurt to others, and suffer none. 2. His Quality; being of wonderful Activity and Nimbleness; able to mingle with our Fancies, and delude our Imaginations, and work deceitfully against the Souls of Men. He can actuate a Body, and make it move and speak; as in the Experiment of the Witch of *Endor*, in bringing up *Samuel* in his Mantle. By Reason of this spiritual and active Quality, a Legion of Devils were in one Man. Evil Spirits are able to convey themselves from Place to Place, as nimbly as a Thought; and their Projects are undiscovered, except by the spiritual Watchman. 3. His Power. Devils are called Powers, *Eph. vi. 12*. Not infinite, but limited Powers; called the Prince of the Power of the Air; whose Power is conceived to extend to the Shaking of the Earth, the swallowing up of whole Cities; the disturbing the Course of the Clouds, in causing Storms of Wind, and Thunder, and Lightning, when permitted. We read of the Strength that the possessed Man had, that no Man could tame him, and how he broke assunder all his Chains and Fetters, *Mark v. 3, 4*, and what

what Power there was in one Angel. The same Reason is in good and bad Angels, for that natural Power they have, when armed with God's Command and Permission. Of Satan's Power you read in the first of *Job*. See, *2 Kings* xix. 35. A hundred and fourscore and five thousand destroyed by one Angel in the Camp of *Assyria*. 4. His Subtilty. His Knowledge is much improv'd by Experience: Tho' he cannot know the Thoughts of the Heart, till they be formed into Words, or Actions; nor foretel Things future, except such as follow by Order of Nature, and such as God hath revealed to him, by using his Service for the Punishment of the Disobedient, whom he gives over to strong Delusions to believe Lies, *2 Thess.* ii. 11. By this Subtilty, knowing the several Tempers, Complexions, and Inclinations of Men, and how to fit his Temptations thereto; God, in his righteous Judgment, suffers him to delude and infatuate many. 5. His Envy and deadly Hatred against Mankind: Hence called *the Accuser of the Brethren*, *Rev.* xii. 9, 10. The great Dragon, the Devil, the Deceiver of the whole World, the roaring Lion, *1 Pet.* v. 8. Lightning from Heaven, *Luke* x. 18. I beheld Satan, as Lightning, fall from Heaven. Smoke from Hell represents some of his terrible Temptations; but Lightning from Heaven is what may be more

more dangerous: Or, his Appearance as an Angel of Light, the more glorious, bright, and heavenly-like he appears in his Attack, the more his Hatred and Enmity is exercised, and yet covered. 6. His Numbers: his Name is Legion, for he is many; and called Principalities and Powers, in the plural Number. Here are the Tempters.

Second Observe. Satan is limited; *Behold Satan hath desired you.* For all his Power and Wisdom, natural and experimental, his Malice and Malitude; yet, he is limited, and under Authority. His Power is not absolute, but limited; his Actions not authoritative; but under Command and Control: He is fain to go to God by Petition. Satan, observe, can do nothing against Men, but by God's Permission: He must first ask Leave. Tho' he be the Prince of the Air, and the God of this World, *Eph. ii. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 4.* yet, he is but a tributary Prince, a *Semi-deus* or a Demi-god, as the Heathens called some of theirs; not the chief Prince, not the great God. For as furious and fiery as he is, God hath his Hook in his Nose, and his Bridle in his Jaws, as God said of *Sennacherib*, *2 Kings xix.* We have two eminent Examples of this Truth. 1. In the Case of *Job*, till he had his Life signed from God, he could not touch his Body; nay, nor his Servants, nor Camels, nor Asses.

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See how expressly God inhibits him from touching his Body, *Job* i. 12. and then commits his Body to him, but reserves his Life, *Job* ii. 6. 2. In the Gospel; where a Legion of Devils become Suiters to Christ for Leave to enter into the Swine, *Luke* viii. 30. Into unclean Swine, a fit Habitation for unclean Spirits; yet into such he dare not enter, but by Leave first obtained of Christ. And are not ye better than many Swine? Ye, to whom Christ is offered? He cannot touch your Life, no not your Skine, no not your Swine at your Gate; nay, a Legion of them together dare not venture without God's Warrant. The Devil may, 1. Present the Object; as the Fisher lays in his Bait. 2. He may corrupt the Organ, and so deceive; as a Juggler casts Mists before the Eyes of his Spectators. 3. He may persuade, as a cunning Sophist, with feigned Arguments. And, 4. He may take Advantage of predominant Humours in the Constitution, as an experienced Philosopher. Further, he cannot go to do any Thing upon us, or within us, without God's Permission, and without our free Consent. For, till we open the Door, he cannot enter. He may knock, and intreat, and persuade, and promise. The Spark is his; but we are the Tinder, else it could not kindle. The Bait is his; but we must take it, else we cannot be taken,

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'Tis our yielding to his Temptations, that hides his Arrows, and makes them dangerous to us. For, if we consent not; and cast not ourselves in the Way of Temptation; the Sin is upon his Score. 'Tis only a Punishment to be tempted; but 'tis Sin to yield, &c. Hence,

1. This reprove many that attribute only to the Devil many Things whereof they are not able to give a Reason, as extraordinary Storms in the Air, and the like, but presently forget God. Satan, no Doubt, can do great and marvellous Things; But shall we not remember that Satan is but a Hammer in God's Hand? Whatsoever the Rod be, 'tis the Hand of God that strikes you. Satan had inflicted a heavy Evil upon *Job*, and taken away all that he had; yet *Job* says, *The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken*. He saith not, *The Lord giveth, and the Devil taketh away*. Satan is but an Instrument, chain'd up till God let him loose; a poor, slavish, tributary, beggarly Spirit. He is but the base Executioner of God's just Vengeance: And 'tis but our Guiltiness and Faithfulness that arms his Malice against us.

2. This Observe is full of Comfort to poor Believers in all their Temptations, that God hath set his Bound to Satan, as well as to the Sea; and can rebuke him, as he rebuked the Winds and Waves, and they obeyed him. 'Tis Comfort also, that

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more are with us than against us ; for our God is stronger than the strong Man armed. Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you ; for your God will not suffer you to be tempted above your Measure. When we fight ; the Lord helps ; and, when we conquer, he crowns.

3. Is it Satan's Desire to tempt us ? Then let our Desire prevent his Desire. He desires to have you : But let it be your Desire that he may not have you at his Will. So Christ taught you, *Lord, lead us not into Temptation ; but deliver us from Evil*, or deliver us in it : No Doubt, your Desire and Petition will be sooner heard than Satan's, sooner accepted than his ; because ours tend to Good, and his to Evil. Put your Petition and Desire in the Hand of the great Saviour, who is the Favourite of Heaven, whom the Father heareth always, and to whom God can deny nothing. Pray continually, that God may not deliver you to the Mercy of Satan, which is cruel : His tender Mercies are Cruelty ; and his most glorious Appearances are Deceit and Delusion. One would wonder to hear Satan at his Prayers. That Legion of Devils besought Christ ; and, here they desire. Think not strange that Hypocrites can pray, and Pharisees make long Prayers ; for here is Satan praying. Yet Satan had rather pray as them ; for he prays
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that he may make a Prey of them: Satan's End is their End and Ruin.

4. Is Satan desiring to have you? O! Let this put you in Mind that Christ is desiring to have you. Satan is desiring to have you, that he may destroy you; but Christ is desiring to have you, that he may save you. There are two Suitors, then, about you this Day, that have a great Desire after you. O! tell me, which of them shall have you? which of them will you yield unto? a praying Devil, or a praying Jesus? The Devil is praying to God that he may have you; and praying you to come to him, and serve him as the God of this World, and offering you all worldly Advantages. Christ is praying to God, that he may have you; and praying you to come to him, and sending us to pray you, in his Stead, that you may be reconciled to God. O! come, come to Jesus, and plead upon his Prayer and Intercession. Then surely your Desire, and not Satan's, shall prevail; for Christ's Desire is heard of God. O! shall not his Desire be heard of you? If you neglect Christ this Day, you give way to the Devil's getting his Desire about you. Therefore, O! come, come, come to Jesus, and you are safe, &c.

Third Observe. It is the constant Endeavour of Satan to way-lay the Children of God, that he may spoil and rob

them of their Graces and Comforts. Here we may, 1. Prove the Point. 2. Speak of his sifting and winnowing Work. 3. Give Reasons. 4. Apply.

— *First*, For Proof hereof, see 1 Pet. v. 8. The Devil is not idle, but *walking about*; not harmless, but as *a roaring Lion*; not blind, but *seeking*; not to do Good, but to *devour*. Hence Paul gives Warning to be armed, Eph. vi. 11.-----18. Job i. and Job ii. 2. As the great red Dragon stood before the Woman, to drown her Child as soon as it was born, Rev. xii. 4. There is not a Child of the Church born in Zion, but Satan is ready, if he can, to strangle it in the Birth, or smother it in the Cradle, as the *Egyptians* did the *Israelites's* Children, and as *Herod* did the *Innocents* in *Bethlehem*; especially, if it be a Male Child, as Rev. xii. 5. of greater Gifts, or Place, or Hopes. He goes up and down like a Pack-horse in a Market; and, if he can spy an Opportunity, he will be making his Assaults. A cheerful Spirit he will tempt to Presumption; a sad and dejected Spirit, to Despair; young Men to Lust, and old Men to Covetousness. He has a Bait for every Fish, as a High-way Thief has his false Faces, all to deceive.

Secondly, I come next to speak of his sifting and winnowing Work. He seems to sift as Wheat. 'Tis a Phrase borrowed from Husband-men, that sift their Corn to
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separate the Wheat from the Chaff, or the Flour from the Bran; and, applied to a spiritual Sense, sometimes God is said to sift his People, *Amos ix. 9. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the House of Israel among all Nations, like as Corn is sifted in a Sieve, yet shall not the least Grain fall upon the Earth.* And here Satan would be sifting the Apostles; but with a large Difference: For God's End is to take away the Dross, the Husks, and leave the Corn; but Satan's End is to take away the Flour, and leave but the Bran. God would purify his People; but Satan would poison and corrupt them. Now in sifting there are four Things, Elevation, Agitation, Separation, and Dejection. So there is a fit Resemblance herein to Satan's Temptations.

1. In sifting there is Elevation or lifting up. So in Temptation there is an uplifting by Pride of Graces and Excellencies. *Paul* was in Danger to be puffed up, thro' Abundance of Revelations. As the Eagle carries up the Shell high to throw it down upon some Rock; so, Satan when he bladders Men up to a Conceit of their own Goodness, he intends their Ruin, and by flattering them to tickle them to Death.

2. In sifting there is Agitation or shaking the Corn together. This shaking of God's People is usually done by Threatnings, Stripes, Imprisonment and Persecutions, to
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vex and trouble and dishearten them, as *Acts* xii. 1.----24. So the Holy Ghost told *Paul*, that in every City Bonds and Afflictions did abide him, and he must abide them, *Acts* xx 23.

3. In Winnowing there is Separation or Scattering. This Way Satan attempts, by dividing, to rule; and so to dissolve the Communion of Saints; to drive them into a Cave, as *Elijah* was left alone, and these of whom the World was not worthy, *Heb.* ii. 37, 38. *They wandered about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, being destitute, &c. they wandered in Deserts, and in Mountains, and in Dens, and in Caves of the Earth.*

4. There is Dejection or casting down upon the Earth: As to puff up some to Pride and Presumption, so to deject others to Sadness and Despair: By any Means to make Men more remiss in the Service of God: Either by the Sun or by the Wind, to make the Traveller lay aside his Cloak: To enervate our Faith; to quench our Zeal; to make the Anchor of our Hope to fail, and some Way or other to spoil us of our Graces or Comforts, and to rob us of our Security, and rob God of his Glory.

Thirdly, What are the Reasons why Satan is allowed to sift and winnow? 1. It must be, because we must be tried. As Offences must come, and there must be
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Heresies ; so, there must be Temptations.

A good Seaman is known in a Storm ; a good Soldier in the Day of Battle. The Seed that is sown among Stones may shew fair to the Eye, till the Sun rise. As Fire consumes the Hay, but purges the Gold ; so, Temptation discerns the Good from the Bad, the sound Christian from the Hypocrite, the Firm from the unstable.

2. To humble us by letting us know our own Strength, and how little we can do when we are put to it. David, *said, in his Prosperity, I shall never be moved ;* but God hid his Face, and he *was troubled.*

As the kind Nurse lets the forward Child take a Fall to make it look to its Feet, and prevent a worse Danger : So, God takes away his Hand, and then we fall by some Temptation. But he withdraws himself

to make us hold faster, and stick the closer to him. 3. To increase our Faith and Patience and Zeal in praying, which would languish without Exercise ; as Water corrupts with standing, and clears with running. 4. To make us know the Worth of Grace, that it is *more precious than Gold that perisheth,* 1 Pet. i. 7. And how rich we are. Thieves break not into Barns filled with Husks or Snares. 'Tis a good Religion that Men and Devils persecute. 5.

That God may be glorified in destroying the Work of the Devil in the Issue. 6. That his People may be honoured : For

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they by whom Temptations are conquered are sure to be crowned. God suffers his Children sometimes to be tempted, knowing they shall come off with Honour, and be crowned Overcomers.

Fourthly, For Application of this Subject, 1. Let none please themselves with this Thought, that they were never tempted or assaulted by Satan. Carnal Ease is no good Evidence of spiritual Safety. 2. Let no poor Christian be disquieted or discouraged, because Satan is busy about them. He set upon Christ; and shall not the Disciple be as the Master. When the strong Man armed keeps the House, all is quiet. The Devil rent the Child grievously, when he was going out. 3. Let us be always in Readiness with our Armour on. Let us be sober, and watchful, and vigilant. 4. In winnowing Times, let us look to Jesus that our Faith fail not.

Fourth Observe. Satan's Temptations are very subtle and delusive. His Sieve may be very narrow. His sifting and winnowing Time is a Time of great and strong Delusion. Here I would offer some Remarks concerning Satan's Delusions.

First, Remark that there are two Extremes to be much avoided, namely, the calling the Work of the Spirit of God a Delusion, and the calling the Delusions of Satan the Work of God's Spirit. To call the Work of God's Spirit a Delusion,
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and to do it knowingly, is a doing Dispute to the Spirit of God: And, again to call the Delusions of Satan the Work of God's Spirit is, an ascribing too much to the Devil, giving him the Place of God.

Secondly, Remark that the Devil is God's Ape. Christ was evidently demonstrated to be the true *Messias*: Yet he said there should be false Christs, *Matth. xxiv. 4, 5. Take Heed that no Man deceive you. For many shall come in my Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. Ver. 24. There shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great Signs and Wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect.* There are deep Things of God, and also the Depths of Satan, that we read of *1 Cor. ii. 14. Rev. ii. 24.*

Thirdly, Remark that the Delusions of Satan are as large as the Operations of the Spirit of God. The Devil hath his false Apostles, his false Comforts, his false Light, his false Assurance. He is said to fill *Ananias's* Heart, *i. e.* made his Heart audacious and bold, as some explain it. He hath also his false Prophecies and foretelling Events. The Devil told *Saul* what should befall him. He may know some Things to come by Revelation from God, for the Punishment of these that shall be seduced. Among the *Anabaptists* in *Munster*, when a Law was made for all to bring their Goods to the common Stock, Maids
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could tell (as Peter did of *Ananias*) how much every Man had hid at home of his Goods. See *Deut. xiii. 1. 2.* *If there arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and giveth thee a Sign, or a Wonder: and the Sign or the Wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them: Thou shalt not hearken unto the Words of that Prophet, &c.*

Fourthly, Remark that Satan accommodates his Temptations to the Times. The Time of the *Reformation* was a Time of deep Delusions of Satan prevailing. The Reformers were reviled, as Men concerned about the Letter, not the Spirit of the Gospel, by these that pretended to extraordinary Revelations.

Hence, they had bitter Conflicts, not only with *Papists*, but with Men that pretended to be more enlightned than the Reformers were, and to have high Teachings of the Spirit of God, even above the Scriptures. These that did adhere to the Scripture, and would try the Spirits and Revelations by it, were called *Literistas* & *Vocalistas*, Literists and Vocalists, Men acquainted only with the Words and Vowels of the Scripture, having nothing of the Spirit of God. *Luther* was inveyed against as having published nothing but *Carnale Evangelicum*, a carnal Gospel. Wherever Reformation-light broke out, there

there these Tares came up, whereby great Divisions were raised, and the Reformation was made abominable and odious to the World. Such seem to be the Attempts of Satan at this Day, when the Standard of a Testimony is lifted up for a covenanted Reformation. The Power and Policy of Hell is at Work to bring any such Mint at Reformation under Contempt; which, we are forewarned, Satan may get Leave to do, by strong Delusions and lying Wonders, as in the fore-cited *Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* Where a false Prophet is said to give a Sign or a Wonder, and the Sign or Wonder is supposed to come to pass. But observe there, 1. The Devil's Design, Ver. 2. namely, to seduce, *saying, Let us go after other Gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them.* Thus the present Temptation seems to be, let us go to some other God, or some other Way of Worshipping God, or some other Form of Church-government and Discipline, than what we have known and sworn to be founded upon God's Word; let us, after Vows, make Inquiry, and inquire after some new God, new Worship, new Government of the Church. Why, here is a new Prophet risen, giving Signs and Wonders that come to pass: Here is Satan's Design. But, 2. Notice why God permits this. Why, as it may be for hardning a Backsliding Generation in his righte-

ous Judgment; so, for trying of his People, Ver. 3, 4. *The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your Heart, and with all your Soul; whether you will cleave to him and his Truth, even when Truth is persecuted, reproached, and brought into Discredit by Satan's Delusions. O! then, with what Holiness, Humility and Circumspection ought the Children of God to walk in such Times of Temptation and Delusion? that they be not soon shaken in Mind, by Spirit, or by Word, or by Letter, as you have the Expression, 2 Thess. ii. 2. We are told, That in the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith, giving Heed to seducing Spirits, 1 Tim. iv. 1.*

Fifthly, Remark that the ordinary Effects of Delusion are Violence and Confidence. Violent Motions are ordinarily from an evil Spirit, hurrying the Soul beyond all Bounds and Limits, effecting very sudden Alterations and strong Passions; whereas, the Spirit of God is more sedate and composed. 'Tis true, the Power and Efficacy of the Spirit of God is demonstrated by the appearing of fiery cloven Tongues, and by a mighty rushing Wind; but, at another Time, appearing in the Form of a Dove, demonstrating, that 'tis such a Fire and Power, as is consistent with the other Graces of Meekness and Humility, and with holy Fear and Trembling.

bling. Confidence is also an ordinary Effect of Delusion, Self-confidence, Ostentation. The Holy Ghost descended in the Shape of a Dove, to shew how meek and humble the Operations of the Spirit are in these whom he dwells. The Deluded are usually confident, because the *Delusions* are *strong*; because they come by Way of Judgment, for abusing former Light, and not receiving the Truth in the Love of it. These four Hundred false Prophets, in *Abab's* Time, are thought by the Learned to be true Prophets at first, and such as were of the Company and College of the other Prophets; but, abusing that Gift to the pleasing of Men, to the seeking of themselves, and siding with the Times, they were justly delivered up of God to such a false Way; and they were harden'd like *Pharaoh*; harden'd of God in their deceitful Way, as you see in *Zedekiah's* Impudence, 1 *Kings* xxii. 24. when he struck *Micajah* on the Cheek, saying, *Which Way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?* Spiritual Judgments make Men secure, and full of Self-flattery, and confirm them more to believe a Lie.

Sixthly, Remark that, as the Spirits are to be tried by the Scripture; so these are Signs and Marks whereby Delusions of Satan may be known, and distinguished from the saving Operations of the Spirit.

Quest.

Quest. When are Impressions and Impulses evidently delusive? *Ans.* Beside what is said already, 1. When the Impression carries a Man out of his Sphere, and turns private Persons to publick Preachers, without being called of God, *as was Aaron, Heb. v. 4.* in a regular Way to the sacred Office: And when one is persuaded to that which is good, but without a Commission or Warrant. *Uzzak's* holding up the *Ark* was good; but he had no Commission; and therefore was slain. 2. When publick Devotion is brought in and practised, to the Prejudice of our particular Callings. God calls Men to *be diligent in Business*, as well as *servent in Spirit, serving the Lord*, Rom. xii. 11. But when one Duty excludes another, from Time to Time, 'tis delusive Work. 3. When People are persuaded to Duty unseasonably and unmeasurably. The Righteous bringeth forth his Fruit in his Season, *Psal. i. 3.* God hath made every Thing beautiful in his Season. The *God of Order*, by his Spirit, puts not a Man upon irregular Duties. The Duty is not from the Spirit of God that is unmeasurable, no more than that which is quite unseasonable. As Duty misplaced differs little from Sin, if it be not just turned into Sin; so a Man is persuaded to Duty unmeasurably when he is tempted to such a Multitude of Duties as to weary

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out his Spirits, and exhaust them to the Ruin even of the Body. But he that came to save Souls, came not to destroy Bodies.

4 When any Truth is advanced, in order to make Way for Error, or one Truth maintained to the Prejudice of another. Devils may confess Christ and his Truths, to serve a Turn, *Mark i. 24. Acts xvi. 17.* It may be to divide Christ in his Offices, and to disparage some other Truths. He may allow false Prophets to teach some Things Christ has commanded, providing Men be not taught to observe all Things whatsoever he has commanded, as in *Matth. xxviii. 20.* The Devil may possibly extol Christ as a Prophet in his Doctrine, that he may dethrone him as a King in his Government; for he cannot endure that Christ should reign. He may suffer the Flowers of Gospel Doctrine to be spread, upon Condition he can get the Hedge of Discipline and Government, that should be about God's Garden of Flowers, overthrown; with a Design, that the Flowers themselves may be trampled on and ruined in the Issue.

5. That which hath no Will to be tried is delusive. Truth seeks the Light, and is willing to be searched, *John iii. 20. 21.* Every one that doeth Evil, hateth the Light; neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth the Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought

wrought in God. 6. That which hath a native Tendency to promote Sin and Security is Delusion. If it tend to encourage Sin and Corruption, whether personal or publick Corruption, and tend to discourage Reformation, personal or publick Reformation, then 'tis evidently Delusion; for Unholiness cannot be from the Holy Spirit. Thus these that endeavoured to discourage *Nehemiah* in building the Wall of *Jerusalem*, shewed thereby what a delusive Spirit they were of, *Neh. vi. 14. My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their Works, and on the Prophetess Noadiah, and the Rest of the Prophets that would have put me in Fear.* That cannot be of God which opposes the Work of God, and of Reformation. Again, if it tend to lead to Security, 'tis a Delusion, *Rev. iii. 17.* Now they think they are rich, they want nothing; but the Spirit of God thinks otherwise, and tells them they want all Things.

Seventhly, Remark that God may justly let loose a Spirit of Error and Delusion. This he may do, 1. To punish the Sin of a visible Church in not receiving the Truth, *2 Thess. ii. 11. And for this Cause, namely, Because they received not the Love of the Truth, Ver. 10. God shall send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lie. Psal. xviii. 11. 12. My People would not hearken to my Voice, and Israel would none of*

of me : So I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lust : And they walked in their own Counsels. I shall not say how far God may punish a Church that are corrupt, and will have none of God's Counsel, by leaving them to their own Counsels, and, when they reject a Testimony for God, by allowing them to receive a lying Testimony, and to believe a Lie. 2. To glorify himself, and wipe off the Reproach of his People, by discovering them ; for there must be Heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest, 1 Corinth. xi. 19. that they may appear to be Men of Conscience. 3. That the Truth may be cleared by Opposition: Truth still gain'd, never lost Ground by Opposition. The Opposition that the Sadducees made to the Doctrine of the Resurrection, made Christ clear it from some Old Testament Scriptures, wherein we would never otherwise have known to have sought it. 4. To purge out practical Errors in his own People. When we have low Thoughts of the Scripture, then he lets loose Deists, that we may conceive the higher Value for the Word : When low Thoughts of the Son of God, then he lets loose Arians to deny his Divinity, that we may begin to conceive more highly of Christ. When we have low Thoughts, and wrong Thoughts of the Spirit in his Operations, than he lets loose a delusive Spirit, that we may prize and value the

gracious saving Operations of the Spirit the more.

Eightly, Remark that special Direction is necessary in a Time of Error and Delusion, and in a sifting and winnowing Time. I offer these four Words here, 1. Take not Truth upon Trust or Report, but drink it from the Fountain of holy Writ, otherwise we will err, not knowing the Scriptures. 2. Labour to find the Truth in the Good thereof from your Experience, *Psal. cxix. 93. I will never forget thy Precepts: For with them thou hast quickned me.* You may as soon shape a Coat for the Moon, as fix Men in divine Truth, that know nothing of the Sweetness of divine Truth. This and that, and the other Persuasion is all alike to them. 3. Fortify yourselves against a Time of Trial, *John xvi. 1, 2. These Things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended. They shall put you out of the Synagogues; yea, the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God Service.* 4. Take Heed of that Light that cometh in an Hour of Temptation; for tho' it may be right, yet it needs to be well tried; because, at such a Time, Satan is busy to come in with wild Fire, that misleads the Traveller. Hence, *Rev. iii. 10. special Keeping is necessary in the Hour of Temptation; for then we are apt to favour that Light that leads to shun the Cross, and to side with the Times.*

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When Satan's Sieve is very small, People need a very strong Faith. If there be a Picture of Conversion drawn by the Devil, as an Angel of Light, how hard may it be to perceive the Depths of Satan. Think not strange tho' Satan should counterfeit Conversion: For I know none of the Graces of God's Spirit but he may pretend to work. And we are sure he can cite Scripture as he did to Christ himself.

Quest. How shall I know a Scripture given by Christ, and one given by the Devil? *Ans.* I shall only say, the Word that the Devil brings in, tends ay to some wicked Effect; either to make the Soul secure or desperate; either to depress it too much to Despair, or elevate it too much to Presumption. It tends either to disturb and discompose the Soul, or else to fill it with false Peace and Comfort.

Quest. But, if the Soul that has been seemingly or really convicted of Sin be afterward comforted by the Word; how may that be known to be of God, or to be of the Devil? *Ans.* We are sure that Satan may give false Comfort and Joy by Words of Scripture. The stony-ground Hearers *received the Word with Joy*, Matth. xiii. 20. But consult the Place, in order to find the Difference between that Joy and the Joy of the true Believer, that he gets by the Word. 1. The Seed is said to be

received in a *Stony Place*. The Heart of Stone was never made a Heart of Flesh.

2. *They hear the Word, and anon with Joy receive it*: No Word is here of their receiving Christ in the Word. Their sudden Joy was suspicious when let in upon a stony Heart not melted with the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness in his Glory upon their Souls, giving Light and Heat, the Light of Life, the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Mind and Understanding, giving Life and Heat to the Heart and Affections. Sudden Joy without this, is deceitful and delusive.

3. 'Tis said, *They have no Root in themselves, no inward Root*. True Joy is rooted in the inward Knowledge of Christ, and Christ revealed in the Soul. 'Tis rooted in the Faith of the Son of God, *in whom believing we rejoice*. 'Tis rooted in Christ the true Vine, and built upon the sure Foundation. 4. 'Tis said *to endure but for a While*; like *John's* Hearers, that rejoiced in his Light for a Season; For, *When Tribulation and Persecution arises because of the Word, by and by they are offended*: They turn Enemies and Opposites to the persecuted Cause of Christ, and have no Mind to suffer for any such Thing. These four Things discover their Joy to be false and delusive. Tho' it come by the Word, yet, when it hath these four Defects, that here the Spirit of God speaks of; then it
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says that the Word that gives them Joy comes not right, but by some evil Spirit.

II. I proposed next to offer some Meditations upon the whole Text.

Meditation *first*. Our Lord Jesus Christ would not have his Children discouraged tho' they have a powerful and political Enemy to oppose them. For the Time of Satan's Tempting is the Time of Christ's praying. Satan, as described, 1 *Pet.* v. 8. is. 1. A Lion, the strongest of Beasts; a powerful Enemy. 2. A roaring Lion. There are several Roarings of the Lion of Hell: As, when he persuades you that you have sinned against the Holy Ghost; that you are a Reprobate; that the Day of Grace is over; that there is no Mercy for you: When he tempts you, as he did Christ, to worship himself; to kill yourself; to curse God and blaspheme. When he persuades you that Duty is Sin, and Sin Duty. However, Christ hath him in Chains: He is the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*. He hath the Command of that Lion in Hell. 3. Satan is a spiritual, restless Enemy. He never sleeps. If he seems to do so, 'tis with open Eyes. He sees us when we see not him; and being a Spirit he walketh thro' Stone-walls and Iron-bars, no Place can resist him. 4. A cruel Enemy, *seeking whom he may devour*; a Devourer, a Murderer from the Beginning. Watch most earnestly, after the greatest

greatest Duty, and the greatest Fervency: For there may be sudden Cools after the greatest Heats. When the Apostles told Christ that the Devils were subject to them, then he took them aside to pray. If you obtain Mercy, pray, and watch unto Prayer.

Meditation second. Satan is a great Adversary to all true Believers. He makes it his Work to divide between the Soul and God; because he knows the great Love that is between God and Believers, and that they have no such Friend as God: Therefore, he would have them divided. He accuses God to them, and endeavours to fill them with hard and harsh Thoughts of God. He accuses them to God, and therefore he is called the *Accuser of the Brethren*. He leaves no Stone unturned to draw them from God. Hence no Wonder the Men of this World, who are influenced by the God of this World, set themselves with such Hatred to oppose the Children of God, and the Cause of God, and the Kingdom of Christ, and any Testimony for it. This is from the Enmity between the Serpent and the Woman's Seed.

Meditation third. Satan cannot so much as lift up a Finger against a Child of God, until he have Leave asked and given. God hath him in his Chain: Not only in the Chain of his Justice, but in the Chain of his

his Providence; that he cannot go one Whit further than he gets Leave. This is a Part of his Torment that he cannot do what he would. Hence the Devil cried out, *What have we to do with thee?* Luke viii. 28. *Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* Intimating it was a Torment to them that they could keep Possession of these Souls no longer. This may be quieting to tempted Ones, and such as are under Satan's Buffettings, that he can do no more than God lets him. He cannot put one vexatious Thought into the Soul, further than he gets Leave; nor one blasphemous Thought. God hath him in his Chain; and, when he will, he will rebuke him; and, when he rebukes him, he must come off. Let this support you that commit you selves to Jesus.

Christ hath a threefold Title to Dominion over Devils. 1. He is their Maker. 'Tis true, as Devils, they made themselves: But, as Creatures, he made them. 2. Their Conqueror. He spoiled Principalities and Powers. He made a shew of them openly; not only on the Cross, but in his triumphant Ascension. 3. Their Judge, *John* xii. 31. They are his Prisoners in Chains; Yet not close Prisoners, but like Malefactors in Chains, that go abroad, reserved to the Judgment of the Great Day.

Learn, hence, to whom you owe your Safe-

Safety, that you are not destroyed; and to whom to flee for Time to come. To whom should you commend your Soul, Body, Family; Morning and Evening? Christ rules in the Midst of his Enemies, the Devil, and his Instruments, that have the Venom of the Devil in their Heart, and are of their Father the Devil. The Church and People of God and the Cause, of Christ shall be maintained and preserved tho' every malignant Opposer were a Devil. Fear not the Devil; otherwise, you shew yourself weak in Faith; you dishonour Christ, you worship the Devil. Resist the Devil confidently: For, in Christ, you have overcome him already. Christ's Victory was not for his own Sake, but for ours. If you are Believers you are delivered already from his ruling Power, tho' not from his tempting Power.

Meditation *fourth*. Satan loves to be vexing these whom he cannot ruin. He desires to sift and shake them, tho' he knows he cannot prevail. *Rev. xii. 12. Wo to the Inhabiters of the Earth and of the Sea: For the Devil is come down unto you having great Wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short Time.* 'Tis a great Affliction to be under Satan's Temptations. They are like Thorns in the Flesh very grievous. Therefore, when we are freed by the Son of God, we ought to be thankful, saying, *Psal. cxvi. 7. Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul*

Soul ; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

Meditation fifth. God does sometimes hear Satan's Desire, and he may get Part of it. *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you ; But I have prayed, &c.* Satan hath prayed ; and 'tis not said I will free you from his sifting Temptations, but, *I have prayed for thee.* Thus God gave Satan Leave to tempt *Job.*

Quest. But how does God give Leave to Satan to tempt his Children, since he is a Father to them? *Ans.* God does it in a holy Way. 'Tis no Sin to be tempted, tho' 'tis a Sin to yield. The Evil of a Temptation is from the Devil and ourselves ; the Good of it is from God. For God does it wisely : He knows how to deliver us out of the Temptation, and how to bring Good out of it. Again, God does hereby commend himself to us in all his Attributes ; as, 1. In his Love. Tho' he suffers the evil One to tempt and sift you, he shall never be able to destroy you. 2. He commends to us his Truth and Faithfulness. God had promised that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent : And what he made good to Christ, he makes good to them, 1 Cor. x. 13.---- *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able ; but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, &c.*

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3. He commends his Wisdom to us herein; that, notwithstanding all Satan's Temptations and Devices, yet he counterplots the Enemy, and *comforts* his People in *their Tribulation*, 2 Cor. 1. 4. In this very Way that God suffers Satan to bruise our Heel, he will break his Head. Again, God suffers it for the Believers own Good; that, by shaking Temptations, they may be the more firmly rooted. Their Faith is hereby tried. Hence, do not suddenly entertain suspicious Thoughts of God, because he suffers you to be tempted: Nay, he bids you *count it all Joy, when you fall into divers Temptations*, Jam. 1. 2.

Meditation *sixth*. There is no Temptation befalls the Lord's People, that Christ does not foresee, before it come upon us. He knows what is in our Heart, and what is in the Devil's Heart, before it is in Act. Gen. xlix. 1. Jacob *called unto his Sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last Days*. If Jacob could, by the Spirit of God, tell his Children what should befall them for many Ages to come; then much more can Christ tell *Peter* before-hand what Death he should die, and here also what Temptation he should come under, and how far the Tempter should prevail. O he knows all your Temptations, before they come. Nothing can befall you
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unawares. But Jesus Christ, the Captain of Salvation, foresees even all the Wiles of the Devil, and will preserve you to his heavenly Kingdom.

Meditation *seventh*. (From Satan's Desire, and getting Leave to tempt) 'Tis not always a Sign or Token of the Love of God to us, to bestow upon us the Things that we desire. Satan here desires; and God gave him, so far, his Desire. God may give us our Desire, and give it in Anger, *Psal. lxxviii. 29, 30, 31. He gave them their own Desire. But, while their Meat was yet in their Mouths, the Wrath of God came upon them, &c. Psal. cvi. 15. He gave them their Request; but sent Leanness into their Soul. Psal. lxxxi. 12. I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lust.* We find God gave Israel their Wish, *Numb. xiv. 2. They said, Would God that we had died in the Land of Egypt, or would God we had died in the Wilderness: And Ver. 28. God, in his Judgment, takes them at their Word: Their Carcases fell there.* Hence, God, in Love to us, many Times withholds from us what we would have, and what our Desire goes out after, and gives us that which is better. God knows, that thro' the Weakness of our Faith, and the Remainder of our Corruption, we are set upon these Things that would do us no Good.

Meditation *eighth*. Tho' Satan may, for a Time, shake us in the Sieve of Temptation; yet it shall not be long: It will be but like the sifting of Wheat, a few Shakes, and so set down again. Tho' Temptations be grievous, yet they shall be but for a Time; and then God will rebuke the Enemy: For God's Anger is but for a Moment. *Rev ii 10. Fear none of these Things, which thou shalt suffer: Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have Tribulation ten Days, &c.* We have it limited some Times to two Days, *Hos. vi 2. After two Days will he revive us, &c.* yea, some Times limited to an Hour, *Rev. iii. 10. Because thou has kept the Word of my Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation:* Yea, some Times limited to a little Moment, *Isa. liv. 7, 8. For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee. In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment, &c.* So that, tho' Satan may have Leave for a Time, to sift and winnow you, it shall be but for a short Time: And that upon the Accounts following, 1. Because of God's Love to his Children, *Psal. ciii. 13. Like as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* 2. Because, while they are afflicted, he is afflicted in all their Afflictions, *Isa. lxiii. 9.* 3. God knows how frail we are, and how

how weak to bear the Assaults of the Enemy ; and therefore will not suffer to be tempted above what we are able to bear. *Psal. ciii. 14. He knoweth our Frame, he remembreth that we are Dust: And he will not contend for ever, neither be always wroth, lest the Spirit should fail before him, and the Souls which he hath made, Isa. lvii. 14.* He knows that, if the Rod of Affliction and Temptation should remain long upon our Back, we would put forth our Hands to Wickedness, *Psal. cxxv. 3. God knows, if the Temptation should be long, we would weary and faint, Psal. cxix. 82. Mine Eyes fail for thy Word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me? Psal. cii. 2. Hide not thy Face from me in the Day when I am in Trouble, incline thine Ear unto me: In the Day when I call, answer me speedily.* This is Encouragement, that, tho' Trials be heavy, they shall not be long, at least in their Extremity. 4. There is a Need be for these Temptations for a Season, *1 Pet. i. 6. that his People may be stirred up to more Earnestness in seeking to God. So 'tis said of Christ himself, when he was in an Agony, he prayed more earnestly, Luke xxii. 44. So does the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxviii. 1, 2. O Lord God of my Salvation, I have cried Day and Night before thee. Let my Prayer come before thee, incline thine Ear unto my Cry. And when God's Children come and cry to him, he cannot but re-*
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lieve them: As a tender Parent, when he hears his Child cry, he cannot but look to it, and see what it wants. Thus God, when the Children of *Israel* cry to him, *Exod. iii. 7, 8. I have surely seen the Affliction of my People, which are in Egypt, and have heard their Cry, by Reason of their Task-masters: For I know their Sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them, &c.* They have the Advantage of Intercessions going up to God for them. 1 From their Fellow Brethren, pleading with God in a trying Time; they cannot let God alone, and so must be heard, *Psal. cii. 13, 14, 15, &c.* 2 From Christ the great Intercessor, with God for the tempted Ones. He is always at God's Right-hand, pleading for them, and the Father cannot deny him; but will hear speedily. Hence, every one of us should look after our Interest in Christ, that we may be among his *Simons*, whom he will undertake for to God against Satan; otherwise, how shall we stand? If the *Simons*, that belong to Christ, may come into Satan's Sieve, what shall become of others? If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Sinner and Ungodly appear? Hence, see the Duty of believing, ye that are some Times assaulted by Satan. O! do not cast away your Confidence. Be not cast down, as if you were now cast out of God's Favour. Tho' the Temptation be smart, it shall

shall not be long. The Vision is for an appointed Time; and it will speak: Therefore wait with Patience. When the Trial is most grievous, the Deliverance is nearest. O! how short are your Temptations, in Regard of what Satan would have, and would be at! Also, in respect of Eternity, *Our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory,* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Meditation ninth. However great and grievous Satan's Temptations may be, and however fierce his fiery Darts, Christ hath placed a *But* against them, that they shall not prevail altogether. The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against Zion: God shall help, and that right early, particularly, 1. When Matters come to an Extremity, and their Strength be almost quite gone, *Deut. xxxii. 36. For the Lord shall judge his People, and repent himself for his Servants, when he seeth that their Power is gone, and that there is none shut up or left.* 2. When Men and Means fail, and the Help of these is vain, *Psal. cviii. 12. Matth. xvii. 16, 17.* He remembers us when we are brought low; *Psal. cxvi. 6.* 3. When the Power of Satan and his Instruments has so far prevailed, that now they think they are sure to overcome, then will the Lord come with Deliverance. When *Pharaoh and his Host have Israel hem'd in between them*

them and the Red Sea, then God shew's his Salvation nearest, when the Enemy's Hope is highest. Hence, see this should encourage the Faith of God's Children under any Affliction or Temptation. Tho' they sigh and groan at present, yet they are to live by Faith on Christ: For, when we are lowest, and our Strength gone, and Means fail, and Enemies insult, then is God's Time to help, and Christ's Time to set up his *But* in the Way. But I have prayed for thee.

Meditation *tenth*. Our Strength and Comfort, in an Hour of Temptation, lies not in any Grace already received, or in what is with us; but in what Christ hath prayed for, and is with him. Your Relief lies in what I have prayed for; and I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not, *Matth. viii. 8*. The Centurion said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof; but speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed: So, when we see the Greatness of our own prevailing Corruptions, and the Little-ness of our Faith, yet we may take Encouragement in this, That Christ hath prayed for us; That (may the Believer say) He hath prayed for me, and spoke a Word for me: And, if he but speak the Word, I shall be healed. So, when the Prophet's Servant saw a great Host, the Prophet forbids him to fear; for there
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be more with us than against us, 2 Kings vi. 16. Rom. viii. 34. If God be for us, who can be against us: So, when *Moses* was praying for the People of *Israel*, when fighting against *Amalek*, *Exod.* xvii. 11, 12. And when *Aaron* and *Hur* held up his Hand, and he prayed, then *Israel* prevailed. *Moses*, you know, was the typical Mediator; and there was that Force in his Prayer, that, while he was praying, the *Israelites* prevailed: And O how much more Power and Efficacy is there in the Prayer and Intercession of *Jesus Christ*. One Word of *Christ* can rebuke the Devil, and command him to be gone, as *Mark* xix. 25. *Thou dumb and deaf Spirit, I charge thee to come out of him.*

Hence, see the Reason we get not more Power over Satan, and our prevailing Corruptions within us, or the Devil's Temptations without us; even because we look too much to our own Strength, and look too little to the Strength of *Christ's* Prayer, and to the Grace of the Lord *Jesus Christ*. We, some Times, are ready to neglect Duties and Ordinances, and at other Times, lean too much to Duties and Ordinances, and do not live by Faith upon *Christ Jesus*, in the Use of Means.

Meditation eleventh. Satan cannot be more ready with his Desires and Designs against us, than *Jesus Christ* is ready in his Love and Mercy, and well prepared
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to undertake for us. *Satan hath desired you, that he may sift you :* But instantly Christ steps in to pray for us. And there is more Power and Virtue in Christ's Prayer to help us, than there can be in Satan's Malice to hurt us. When the People of *Israel* were to go against *Jericho*, *Joshua* v. See how the Captain of the Lord's Host stood with his drawn Sword in his Hand, ready to help them, Ver. 13, 14. Why, his People are his covenanted Ones in Christ, and his by Donation: They are given to him of the Father, that he should lose none of them: Again, he is their elder Brother; and therefore he cannot endure to see his Brethren under the Power of the invious One, but will step in for their Help.

Hence, our Strength lies in Christ his praying and appearing for us. So, when *Joshua* came to stand before God, Satan was at his Right-hand: But then the Lord Jesus prays for him, and rebukes the Devil, *Zeck. iii. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 3, 4. It is Christ that died: Yea rather, that is risen again, and maketh Intercession for us.* There is not one Day's Temptation, but we should be overcome by it, were it not that Christ upholds, as 'tis said, *Mic. v. 5.* This Man shall be the Peace. Habitual Strength will not do against the grand Enemy. He was too strong for *Adam*, in Innocency; and he has manifold Advan-
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tages more against us: For, 1. Our Graces are very weak. *Adam*, in Innocency, when entring the Lists with Satan, he had a Power to have stood; and yet he was overcome. 2. We have a great Deal of Flesh and Corruption; which *Adam*, in that State, had not. But the Prince of this World hath enough in us to side with him. Therefore we may easily be conquered. 3. Satan can now come within us. He hath this Advantage, which he had not of *Adam* in Innocence: Therefore he can soon overcome us if left to ourselves. 4. The very Corruption, that remains within us, would be too hard for our Graces; and much more, when Satan joins with these Corruptions to attack us. Satan is very strong, called, *The strong Man*: And how shall we Weaklings deal with such a strong Man? He is called the God of this World; how shall we stand before such a God, if we had not the true God upon our Side, *Immanuel*? As Satan's Name, so his Nature, shews him to be strong: He is an Angel by Nature. How shall we stand out against an Angel of Darkness, or against an Angel of Light? For he is both the one really, and the other seemingly.

Why then, see the Need of betaking ourselves to Christ. We may be confident in him, tho' a Legion of Devils were against us. He can discomfit them with a

Word, either by his own immediate Word, or even by his ministerial Word in the Power and Strength of Jesus, for the Design of the Ministry of this Gospel, *Acts xxvi. 18.* is to open Men's Eyes, and to bring them from *Darkness unto Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.* There is not one converted but hath many Devils cast out of him. So that herein lies all our Strength even in flying to Jesus, as *Hezekiah* did, *Isa. xxxviii. 14* *I am oppressed, undertake for me.* Go and plead with God, in Christ's Name, to undertake for you. O why do we prevail so little over our Corruptions and Temptations, but because we go not out of ourselves more into Jesus to undertake for us. If you would live by Faith on Christ, you should not be so inflaved to your Lusts. Give up yourselves to him, and put yourselves under his Shelter.

O set the Power of Christ against the Power of Satan. I'll tell you the Nature of the Devil's Power. 1. All his Power is but a *derived Power.* 'Tis but derived from Christ, who can soon cut him short. See *Isa. liv 16.* *Behold I have created the Waster to destroy,* *Job xii 16* *The Deceiver and Deceived are his.* It may be said of the great Waster of Souls, and the great Deceiver of Souls, he would not have any Power were it not given him. Thus our Saviour speaks to *Pilate,* *Thou couldst have no Power against me, were it not given thee of my Father:*

ther : Even so it may be said of Satan's Power. 2. As his Power is a derived, so it is a conquered *Power*. It is already conquered by Christ who hath judged the Prince of this World. 3. As it is a derived and conquered, so it is a *limited* Power, *Job* xxxviii. from Ver. 8. to Ver. 11. It is a limited Power in a double Sense ; 1. It is limited in regard he hath not the Power he would fain have ; he would fain know what is in our Heart ; he hath a good Guess at what is there ; but he cannot search the Heart : *That* is God's Prerogative. He would fain not only tempt us, but he would also have Power to force us to sin ; but this he hath not, he hath a tempting but not a compelling Power. He bids Christ cast himself down, but he had no Power to cast him down. So, he bids us cast ourselves down into the Mire of Sin ; but he hath no Power to force us thereto. 2. It is limited, in regard he cannot use the Power he hath, any further than Christ will suffer him. 4. His Power is a subservient Power. It is such a Power as Christ Jesus will serve himself in ; for Christ will turn Satan's Power to God's Glory. So *1 Cor.* v. 5. When the incestuous Person was to be given up to Satan, it was but for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, considering what a feeble and tributary Power, that
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of Satan is, we need not fear him. Why, consider the Power of Christ. He is the Power of God, and his Power is Almighty Power ingaged for us. We have then no Cause to fear the Power of Satan, if we will by Faith depend upon the Power of Christ; and, for your Help herein, consider these four Things. 1. Ordinarily all our Trouble arises from questioning the Power of Christ, *Numb. xi. 21. The People among whom I am are six hundred thousand Foot-men, and thou hast said, I will give them Flesh that they may eat a whole Month: A probable-like Promise, might he say. Thus Martha and Mary, John ii. 32. This was what they stumbled at, If thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died. As if Jesus had not been as able to raise him when dead, as to heal him while alive. Tho' you think many Times you do not doubt so much of his Power, as of his Willingness; yet the Truth is, this is the great Hindrance of our Faith, our doubting and not depending upon the Power of God and of Christ, when Matters come to a Pinch.* 2. The Holy Spirit of God especially calls upon us to attend upon the Power of Christ, *Heb. vii. 25. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, &c. Isa. lxiii. 2. Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed Garments from Bosrah? This that is glorious in his Appearel, travelling in the Greatness of his Strength? I*
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that speak in Righteousness, mighty to save. Look unto me and be saved, all the Ends of the Earth; for I am God and there is none else.

3. We do not find in Scripture any heroick Instance of the Faith of God's People, wherein they did not eye the Power of God. This was that which supported Abraham's Faith, *Rom. iv. 21. He stagger'd not at the Promise, &c.* Why? Because he was fully persuaded that he who had promised was able to perform. See, in the Offering of his Son Isaac, what supported him, *Heb. xi. 19. He accounted that God was able to raise him up, even from the Dead.* 4. Our Lord Jesus doth ordinarily so order Matters in his great Work towards his People, that they and all By-standers may see that it must be the Work of his own Power. *2 Cor. i. 9. We had the Sentence of Death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the Dead:* That we might see and acknowledge the mighty Power of Christ; and that hereby we may be encouraged in our Faith, to trust in him tho' we see never so much Weakness and Inability in ourselves; and that we may see, if we be overcome, it is because we go not duly to Christ for Strength: For he gives Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might he increaseth Strength. In a Way of coming to him, we should be able to grapple with our strongest Corruptions and Temptations. Let us not fear Satan,

Satan, but fly to him that says, *I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not.*

Meditation twelfth. That, whatever Grace in us Satan does most envy and invade, that Grace Christ Jesus will take most Care to strengthen and defend. *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.* See *1 Thess iii. 5.* For this Cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your Faith, lest by some Means, the Tempter have tempted you, and our Labour be in vain. There is no Grace that Satan envies and invades so much as this of Faith. This, tho' not expressed, is naturally included in the Words. Our Lord Jesus his Care is principally to fortify that Part, which Satan does violently impugn; and that is our Faith. The Captain of Salvation does wisely defend that Fort, which is most fiercely attacked. This is Satan's Method. Thus he began with the first *Adam* (by the Means of *Eve*) to make him not believe God's Threatning, *Gen. iii. 4.* He attempted *Adam's* Faith: For he had Faith, whereby he believed all God's Truths, revealed or to be revealed: 'Tis past all peradventure there was in the Disposition and Preparation of his Mind, a potential Faith; even to believe the Promise of Christ, when it should be manifested unto him: And, as all Sin was wrapt up in this one of *Adam's* Disobedience; Pride, Ambition, Gluttony, Unthankfulness, &c. So principally Infidelity,

fidelity, as the Inlet of all the rest, Thus
 he attempted *David*, *Psal. 116. I said in
 my Haste all Men are Liars*, even the Pro-
 phets of God. Why, now he saw his
 Kingdom deferred, his Enemies increased.
 He thought (but in his Haste, not wait-
 ing God's Leisure) that all Men are Liars.
 Thus he set upon our blessed Lord Jesus,
Matth. iv. If thou be the Son of God; if thou
 be. Now Christ was tempted for our
 Sake, that he might give us, 1. Hélp, in
 compassionating that in us, which he had
 felt in himself: *He suffered, being tempted,
 that he might be able to succour them that are
 tempted.* 2. Warning, to expect that the
 Enemy will not spare the Soldier; that
 ventured on the Captain. 3. Confidence
 and Hope that, as he conquered him for
 us; so, he will conquer him by us. 4.
 Example; that we may be informed how
 he will assault us, and how we must resist
 him. His main Ordinance is planted a-
 gainst the Bulwark of our Faith; the
 Point of his Sword, against the Breast-
 plate of Righteousness and Helmet of Sal-
 vation, which is our Faith and Hope. This
 manifestly appears in all these Examples
 wherein Satan hath prevailed over Men;
 by inordinate Fear of the Creature, to
 make them let go their Obedience and O-
 bligation to the Creator: As in *Abraham*,
 when he told a Lie. Infidelity is the true
 Mother of base Fear. Hence says Christ

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to his Disciples, *O ye of little Faith, wherefore did ye fear:* And so, to the Ruler of the Synagogue, about the enlivening of his Daughter; *Fear not, only believe.* Faith banishes Fear, and makes the *Righteous bold as a Lion*, because they know whom they have believed, and that the God whom they serve is able to deliver them.

Quest. Why does Satan most fiercely assault the Faith of a Christian? *Ans.* 1. Because there is more of the Power of God laid out upon this Grace, than upon any Thing else almost, *Eph. i. 19.* 2. Satan knows that 'tis the Spirit of God that works this Faith in us; and he therefore envies it, and opposes the Work of the Spirit. 3. He knows that God is most delighted with this Grace, and glorified by it; without which 'tis impossible to please him, and in the Exercise whereof he is still pleased. 4. Satan knows that of all other Graces Faith is the strongest to overcome him: Therefore we are exhorted, *Eph. vi. 16. above all to take to us the Shield of Faith.* And 1 *John v. 4.* 'tis said, *This is the Victory whereby we overcome the World, even our Faith.*

On the contrary, there is no Sin that does more undo the Soul, than Unbelief. By our Unbelief we blaspheme God, and make him a Liar. He hath said that he will magnify his Word above all his Name, *Psal. cxxxviii. 2.* But Unbelief discredits his

his Word. Unbelief is the greatest Sin, because 'tis the Mother of all Sin, *Heb. iii. 12. Take Heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God.* When once we turn from God, then we ly open to all Sin. Therefore Satan, above all Graces, envies our Faith. 5. Faith is the most uniting Grace. It unites the Soul to God in Christ: Whereas, Unbelief divides the Soul from God. 6. As Faith furthers good Things to us, Unbelief keeps outward good Things from us. So, that Lord, on whose Hand the King leaned, that would not believe, he had no Benefit by the Plenty in *Samaria*, *2 Kings vii.* It was Unbelief that hindered *Moses* from entering into the Land of *Canaan*. Therefore Satan sets himself most against our Faith. And, because Satan sets himself so much against our Faith; therefore, Christ does most of all take Care of our Faith. All the whole Word of God is written for the Encouragement and Strengthening of our Faith. *John xx. 31. These Things are written* that ye might believe, &c. Hence there is no Objection can be made against believing in the Son of God but there is an Antidote, somewhere in Scripture, to take away these Objections. And, again, we may find that these very Ways that Satan takes for the Weakening of our Faith, our Lord Jesus Christ by these very Means

does strengthen our Faith. For Example, by these Temptations whereby he thinks to overcome us, by these Temptations Christ strengthens our Faith; 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, 8, 9. so as we shall see one Day that we could not have been without them. Again, Satan thinks, by exposing us in the World, to hurt us; therefore Christ, by these Oppositions, does us Good, 1 *Cor.* i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Hence learn the Excellency of Faith; altho' it seems the poorest and weakest Grace, the most beggarly of all the Graces. Love brings Ointment to Christ's Head, and Repentance Tears to wash his Feet; but Faith gives nothing, and brings nothing to Christ: Yet it is designed to a higher Office than any other Grace: It is the Hand that receives Christ, and receives all from him. That can be said of Faith, that cannot be said of any other Grace. Why, as it justifies, the same Thing may be said of Faith, and is really attributed to Faith that is attributed to Christ. 'Tis Christ that justifieth, and Christ that saveth: Yet, we are said to be justified by Faith, and saved by Faith; not in Opposition to Christ, but to live by Faith is to live by Christ, to be saved by Faith is to be saved only by Christ. Again, in the Matter of Justification, Faith is alone. No other Grace is said to justify. Further, notice these Particulars. 1. Faith is that Grace by which we have Access to God. 'Tis many
Times

Times with a poor Soul, as 'tis with a Ship that is tossed in a furious Tempest, and cannot descry Land. Faith is like one getting upon the Top of the Mast, and telling that he discovers the Haven. It brings Christ and the Soul together, 2. As it is the Grace that brings us to Christ; so, it is the Grace that keeps Christ and the Soul together, and preserves the Soul in Christ: Ye are *kept by the Power of God, thro' Faith*. 3. Faith is the Grace that presents us to God spotless and blameless. Faith receives the Righteousness wherein we appear spotless before God, saying, In the Lord have I Righteousness. 4. Faith is the leading and commanding Grace. It leads forth all the other Graces that are in us. It is that holy Centurion, that says to one, Go, and he goes; to another, Come, and he comes: For the Working of all the Graces is according to the Measure of Faith. 5. Faith is the binding and uniting Grace. Love also unites the Soul to Christ: But, tho' it be an uniting Grace the Union that Love makes is only a moral Union, as one Heart in two Bodies; but the Union that Faith makes is a mystical Union: It makes us spiritually and mystically one with Christ. 6. The Excellency of Faith is in this, that it is the one Grace that Christ especially enquires after. *Where is your Faith?* is the great Question. When a Storm seems
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to drive Hope and Courage and all away, the Question is, *Where is your Faith?* If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the Glory of God. If thou believest, all Things are possible to him that believeth. There are two Things our Lord is said to wonder at. The one is, he wondered at their Unbelief, *Mark vi. 6. He marvelled because of of their Unbelief.* Another is, he marvelled at the *Centurion's* Faith. So that it appears, that Faith is that only Grace that Christ inquires after, and is careful about: Therefore it must be a Grace that excels all the other Graces.

On the contrary, we may hence see the Vileness of the Sin of Unbelief. As Faith is the most excellent Grace, so Unbelief is the most abominable Sin. Why,
 1. Unbelief is seated in the most noble Part of the Soul: In the Understanding, It is Darkness; In the Will, Rebellion and Opposition to God. 2. Unbelief is a Seminary of all Kind of Evil. It lets out the Heart to all Manner of Sin. 'Tis the unbelieving Sinner that despises Heaven, and mocks at Hell. 3. Unbelief is a spiritual Self-murder. It is that which shuts out the Soul from Mercy, and that by rejecting the Kindness of God, the Christ of God. 4. See what God speaks of it, *1 John v. 10. He that believeth not God hath made him Liar:* as if there was no Heed to be given to what God speaks, no Re-
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gard to what he says. Hence, Christ's greatest Care is to have Unbelief dashed, and Faith furthered. *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.*

'Tis owing to the Mediation and Intercession of Christ, that the Faith of Disciples, tho' it may fearfully sag, yet it shall not utterly fail. If you be left to yourself, Believer, you will fall; especially, in a Day of Temptation, in a winnowing and sifting Time: But you are to expect Keeping by the Power of God, and the Prayer of Christ. The Prayer of Christ is not only general for all Believers, but for particular Believers. *I have prayed for thee:* Which is an Encouragement for us to pray for ourselves, and an Engagement upon us to pray for others.

Having hitherto spoken to the Premotion, there is next an Admonition here given to *Peter*, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren:* On which I only offer the two following Meditations.

First, In sifting Times the Faith of Disciples, if it do not fail, yet it may sag so far as that they may need a new Conversion. We hear of many Conversions now a-Days, and would to God they were all true, and not delusive. But here is one Mark of that Conversion that is but a Delusion, if they are so sure about their Conversion, as to think they will never need another Conversion. I know no
Converts

Converts in Scripture but needed, as well as *Peter*, to be converted again and again. Some have been converted a hundred Times.

Second Meditation. When Disciples are a-new converted, they are not converted for themselves only, and for their own Good, but for the Good and Benefit of their Brethren, and for the Advantage of the Church of God: To strengthen them that stand, to prevent their falling, and to restore them that are fallen already, and endeavour their Recovery. See the Fruit of *David's* new Conversion, *Psal. li. 12, 13. Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation: And uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach Transgressors thy Ways, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee.* Ver. 18. *Do good in thy good Pleasure unto Zion: Build thou the Walls of Jerusalem.* He hath a Concern for the Conversion of others, and for the rebuilding the Walls of *Jerusalem*. Hence, that must be a wrong Conversion, that hath no Tendency toward the publick Good, but a Tendency to oppose a publick Reformation.

I close with a few Advices relating to these sifting and winnowing Times, 1. See that your Faith be such a Faith as Satan fights against, and Christ prays for. Saving Faith is the Eye-sore of Hell, but under the Care of Heaven. *Quest.* How shall I know if my Faith be of this Sort? Try your Faith by these following Particulars.

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1. Have you ever found an utter Impossibility to believe; yea, the Power of Enmity in your Heart against it. Faith is a Fruit of creating Power, *Eph. i. 19.* And you are utter Strangers to Faith, if you never found a Power of Darkness and Enmity in you, and an utter Impossibility to believe. Have you ever found that you could as soon raise your Body to the starry Firmament, as you could raise up your Soul to embrace Christ in the Gospel?

2. Is it a Faith of the Lord's Operation? Hath the Lord carried you forth to believe with a strong Hand? *Israel* had all the Power of *Egypt* to withstand them: But the Lord sent his Word, and commanded Deliverance. Ye are, by Nature, in an *Egypt* of spiritual Bondage. What hath brought you out? Surely nothing but the Lord himself, the Power of God. Can you say, when you concluded that the dry Bones would never live, and that you was cut off, the Lord instructed you with a strong Hand, and made you to believe, *2 Thess. i. 11. We pray always for you, that our God would-----fulfil all the good Pleasure of his Goodness, and the Work of Faith with Power.*

3. Do you find the same omnipotent Power necessary to draw forth every Act of Faith, by which at first it was wrought. As no Instrument can make itself; so it cannot put itself in Tune. As you could

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not make yourself a Believer; so you cannot keep or maintain Faith, without a skilful powerful Hand. Is it the Lord himself that puts you in Tune? Otherwise you would continue at a Stand for ever, and be as unable to put forth any one Act, as you was unable to plant Faith. Hence the Believer's Cry is, *Awake O North Wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out*, Song iv. 16. *Create in me a clean Heart, O God: and renew a right Spirit within me*, Psal. li. 10

4 Try the Qualities of your Faith, whether it be weak or strong. If it be real and saving, it will be the Spring of spiritual Motion and Action: Any Thing you enjoy of the Influence of Grace, you enjoy it in this Way. Can you say, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the Life I live is by the Faith of the Son of God. True Faith is the Root of Holiness. As the Body without Breath is dead, so is Faith without Works. It sets the Soul upon the mortifying of every Sin, and upon the Performance of every Duty, and the exercising of every Grace, and the bearing of every Cross the Lord lays upon one's Back. True Faith breaths in Sanctification. This is the Element of every Believer, whether weak or strong: Insomuch that, when Sin and Lusts prevail, or lead them into Captivity, they are then out of their Element.

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5. Saving Faith makes every Thing disappear but Christ, and is swallowed up wholly in Christ. Grace itself disappears: Faith itself disappears; as the Stars, at the rising of the Sun. Where one comes to a Court, if the King be not there, he is taken up with the View of the House; but when the King is upon the Throne, then he is taken up wholly with him.

6. Saving Faith is the Eye-sore of Hell. 'Tis a black Mark, if you enjoy your Faith quietly, without Opposition. When the Believer has scaped the Enemy by regenerating Grace, Satan pursues him to the very Gates of Heaven, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, &c.* 2 Tim. iv. 7.

7. Saving Faith is, notwithstanding, improved by these Trials. The Fire may melt down the Vessel: But, while it is in the Fire, our gracious Lord sits a Refiner: Nothing is lost, 1 Pet. i. 7. *That the Trial of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.*

8. The Man seeks to exercise Faith in every Thing: To read in Faith, to hear in Faith, to pray in Faith; yea, to plow in Faith; for whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin; and without Faith 'tis impossible to please God. If the Believer can get Faith exercised, tho' it were in a Dungeon, he is well,

'tis like a Palace to him: But when otherwise, all is wrong.

2. A *second* Advice I would give you, relating to these sifting and winnowing Times is, Do not cast yourself in the Way of Temptations: Shun all Appearance of Evil; and do not speak for Satan. Avoid the Company of Enemies and wicked Men, and if *sinners entice thee, consent thou not*, Prov. i. 10. Yea, watch against the Snares that may be in the Company of the Godly in winnowing Times. *Peter* may be a Snare to draw away many with the Diffimulation of the Time, and the Temptations of the Day.

3. Beware of being either *Gallios* or *Gammaliels* at this Day.

I No Man ought to be of *Gallio's* Temper, that cares for none of these Things that belong to the Testimony of the Day: As if the Affairs of the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the House of God were light Matters. Satan seems at this Day, to be plotting especially against Christ's Government, as if his Doctrine might be tolerate, but his Government were intolerable, or a very trivial and impertinent Thing, that no Man needs trouble his Head about. Satan seems content that Christ preach, providing he do not reign and rule; knowing his Doctrine will not be long uncorrupted, if his Government can be overturned. Therefore,

fore, Men had little Need to be *Gallios* in this Matter.

2. Men ought not to be of *Gamaliel's* Temper. He was a grave, learned and peaceable Man, and highly esteemed among the People, a Man of great Wit and good Sense. However, his Counsel was crafty and corrupt. He acted the Politician. He laid this down for a Foundation, that the Work was either of God or of Man: If of Man, it would come to nought: If of God, it could not be overthrown. But what was the Tendency of all this? Namely, to judge of Religion by Events, and, in the mean Time, to lie by, and do nothing for the good Cause, but just leave it to the Providence of God. Thus many are for acting the Politician, and remaining Neuter, and halting between two Opinions. But *whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might: for there is no Work nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, whether thou goest*, Eccl. ix. 10. Neglect not present Duty.

4. Be watchful and armed. Let spiritual Watchfulness be joined with the spiritual Armour, *Eph. vi.* Let a Man be never so well armed, if he be asleep, his Armour will do little Service.

In a Word, Would you be safe in a Day of Temptation? Then, endeavour, thro' Grace to make it sure, that you are interested in Christ's Prayers, or that he is praying

ing for you. Christ prays not for the World, *John* xvii. 9. but for these that were given him. What a Cordial would it be to you, could you take home to yourself what Christ here says to *Peter*, *I have prayed for thee, &c.* *Quest.* How shall I be sure he is praying for me? *Ans.* In order to have it made sure to you, consider that Word of Christ's Prayer, *John* xvii. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them also, that shall believe thro' their Word.* Christ is praying for all them that do or shall believe thro' his Word, which he calls *their Word*: Our Word, that are Ministers of the Gospel. *Quest.* What Word? It is the Word of Reconciliation, committed to us, that God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself. Dost thou believe thro' this Word? 'Tis the Word that Christ was made Sin for you, that you might be made the Righteousness of God in him. 'Tis the Word of Salvation which is sent to you, lost Sinner. Dost thou believe thro' this Word? 'Tis a Word of Remission to you, guilty Sinner, saying, I will be merciful to your Unrighteousness. Dost thou believe thro' this Word? O come to Jesus in the Faith of this Word. 'Tis a Word of Liberty for you that are Captives, saying, The Lord loveth the Prisoners: Therefore, go forth, ye Prisoners of Hope, and believe this Word. 'Tis a Word of Power
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for the Weak, that can do nothing, and have no Might to do any Thing; a Word, saying, He giveth Power to the Faint, and to him that hath no Might he increaseth Strength. O may you believe in him thro' this Word. 'Tis a Word of Life to the dead Soul, saying, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me tho' he were dead yet shall he live. O will you believe on him thro' this Word? 'Tis a Word of Help to you that say, you cannot believe, if it be not a Cannot of Obstinacy, but of Impotency, that you would fain be delivered from: 'Tis a Word of Help, saying, I have laid Help upon one that is mighty, O will you have his helping Hand, and believe on him thro' this Word? This is what he calls *their Word*, *I pray for all them that shall believe thro' their Word*. And do you now believe? Then take home with you the Cordial for an Hour of Temptation, namely, that, tho' Satan should an hundred Times desire to have you, that he may sift you as Wheat; yet Christ is saying to thee, to thee in particular, I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not. Therefore, tho' you should meet with a sifting Trial or Temptation, that may lay you on your Back for a little; yet you shall be recovered and converted again. And, when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren. Do all the Good you can to your Friends and Neigh-

Neighbours. Do all the Service you can in your Station to immortal Souls, and for promoting Religion and Reformation, personal and national. Beware of *Peter's* Self-confidence, saying, *Tho' all Men forsake thee, yet will not I; left, before the Cock crow, you deny him, and turn your Back upon him and his Cause.* Apply to yourself the Advertisement and Admonition, here given to *Peter, Simon, Simon, Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as Wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not, and, when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren.*

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